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10/779,663

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Motoyuki Ohsugi

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EXAMINER

DAO, THUY CHAN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2192

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/07/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/779,663 | Applicant(s) OHSUGI ET AL. | |
| | Examiner Thuy Dao | Art Unit 2192 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 03 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 June 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 5-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-4, 8 and 9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 5-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to the amendment filed on June 25, 2008.
2. Claims 5 and 6 have been examined.

Response to Amendments

3. In the instant amendment, claims 5 and 6 have been amended.

Claim Objections

4. Claim 5 is objected to because of minor informality. In line 1, the phrase is considered to read as - -[[The]] A computer-readable storage medium ...- -.

Appropriate correction is requested.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicants' arguments have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent Publication No. 2002/0161825 A1 to Kogoh et al. (art made of record, hereafter "Kogoh") in view of US Patent No. 7,325,193 to Edd et al. (art made of record, hereafter "Edd").

Claim 5:

Kogoh discloses *a computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded a program for causing a computer to execute operations comprising:*

reading, from a storing device, flow definition information which defines a predetermined number of hierarchical levels (e.g., FIG. 2, [0031], route definitions for Leave application and Commutation expenses claim, each route has different hierarchical levels for routing/forwarding; FIG. 5, [0034]-[0040]),

on each of which an approver gives approval to a form, in a work flow of a form process (e.g., FIG. 2, [0031], Leave application has approvers such as Supervisor → Personnel Department; Commutation expenses claim has approvers such as Supervisor → Accounting Department; FIG. 9 and related text);

generating a screen program for displaying a screen, which includes approvers by the number of hierarchical levels (e.g., FIG. 5-6, 9 and related text),

by using the read flow definition information (e.g., FIG. 2, [0031], Leave application has route definition such as Issuer/Requester → Supervisor → Personnel Department; Commutation expenses claim has route definition such as Issuer/Requester → Supervisor → Accounting Department; FIG. 9 and related text);

reading, from the storing device, screen definition information which defines screen items of a screen used in the work flow of the form (e.g., FIG. 7, [0052]-[0055], Leave application form; FIG. 2, [0031], Form definition with fields "Date", "Reason", "Amount", "Section", ...; [0023]-[0026]) and

generating a screen program for displaying a listing screen of forms, which wait for approval given by the approvers, by using the read screen definition information (e.g., FIG. 3-4, [0032]-[0033])

wherein the listing screen of forms, which wait for approval by the approvers, are generated in response to respective approvals by the approvers (e.g., FIG. 7, [0052]-[0055]).

Kogoh does not explicitly disclose *[generating a screen program for displaying a screen, which includes] input items of approvers by the number of hierarchical level.*

Art Unit: 2192

However, in an analogous art, Edd further discloses *input items of approvers by the number of hierarchical level* (e.g., FIG. 6-9, col.15: 21-53).

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Edd's teaching into Kogoh's teaching. One would have been motivated to do so to present full controls to a reviewer/approver such as "approve", "approve, send to legal", "save and close" as suggested by Edd (e.g., col.15: 21-53).

7. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kogoh in view of US Patent No. 5,754,857 to Gadol (art made of record, hereafter "Gadol").

Claim 6:

Claim 6, which recites the same limitations as those of claim 5, wherein all claimed limitations have been addressed and/or set forth above. Therefore, as the reference teaches all of the limitations of the above claim, it also teaches all of the limitations of claim 6.

Kogoh does not explicitly discloses *flow definition information which defines a status of presence of withdrawal of a form forwarded in a work flow of a form process and generating a screen program for displaying a screen, which includes a button for withdrawing a form, if the read flow definition information indicates the status of presence of withdrawal.*

However, in an analogous art, Gadol further discloses *flow definition information which defines a status of presence of withdrawal of a form forwarded in a work flow of a form process and generating a screen program for displaying a screen, which includes a button for withdrawing a form, if the read flow definition information indicates the status of presence of withdrawal* (e.g., FIG. 6, item 113, col.10: 56 – col.12: 24).

It would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine Gadol's teaching into Kogoh's teaching. One would have been motivated to do so to provide full options (as an user-friendly interface) to the requester/user as suggested by Gadol (e.g., col.11: 8-25).

Conclusion

8. Applicants' amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to examiner Thuy Dao (Twee), whose telephone/fax numbers are (571) 272 8570 and (571) 273 8570, respectively. The examiner can normally be reached on every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 6:00AM to 6:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tuan Q. Dam, can be reached at (571) 272 3695.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273 8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature of relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the TC 2100 Group receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272 2100.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR

Art Unit: 2192

only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Thuy Dao/

Examiner, Art Unit 2192

/Tuan Q. Dam/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2192